

Checklist: Diagnosis and Management of Wound Botulism

Diagnosis

- ☐ Establish the presence of signs and symptoms consistent with the descending paralysis of botulism. *Did the symptoms begin with cranial nerve palsies (ptosis, diplopia, dysarthria) and progress distally?*
- ☐ If the diagnosis is in doubt, consider an Infectious Diseases consult, a Neurology consult, and/or EMG testing, which should show augmentation of muscle action potential at 20-50 Hz.
- ☐ Determine if the patient has risk factors for wound botulism. *Is the patient an injecting drug user, especially a person who skin-pops black tar heroin?*
- ☐ Look for infected wound(s). Some patients with wound botulism may not have an obvious site of infection.

Obtaining antitoxin

- ☐ Call the San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department, Communicable Disease Program Manager, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at (805) 781-5500 or after hours, weekends, and holidays at (805) 781-4800 and ask to have the Health Officer paged.
- ☐ Receive call from the California Department of Health Services (CDHS) Division of Communicable Disease Control Duty Officer (DCDC DOD) who will discuss the case and release of antitoxin. **(Note: The state's DCDC DOD should not be contacted directly from the hospital initially).**
- ☐ Alert the hospital pharmacy that antitoxin is being released from the quarantine station.
- ☐ Arrange for the transport of antitoxin (the admitting hospital is responsible for transport).

Required pre-antitoxin administration laboratory testing

- ☐ Draw 30 cc's of whole blood into red tubes (three large tubes).
- ☐ Label each tube with the patient's name, "pre-antitoxin serum," and the date and time of collection.
- ☐ Bundle the tubes.
- ☐ Indicate if the patient is taking any of the following interfering medications: neostigmine bromide, neostigmine methyl sulfate, pyridostigmine bromide, mestinon/timespan (used in tensilon test), ambenonim chloride.
- ☐ Send the tubes to the hospital laboratory with instructions to refrigerate and send to the San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department Laboratory. Notify the Public Health Lab at (805) 781-5507, after hours at (805) 784-6493.

Antitoxin administration

- ☐ Test the patient for sensitivity to antitoxin and administer antitoxin according to the instructions in the antitoxin packet.

Wound debridement

- ☐ Debride the patient's wound(s) if any. (CDHS recommends hanging antitoxin prior to wound debridement).

Other considerations

- ☐ Consider high-dose antibiotics effective against anaerobes.
- ☐ Consider vaccination against tetanus if not up to date.

Post antitoxin laboratory testing

- ☐ 12-24 hours after the administration of antitoxin, draw 20 cc's of whole blood into red top tubes.
- ☐ Label each tube with the patient's name, "post-antitoxin serum," and the date and time of collection.
- ☐ Bundle the tubes
- ☐ Send the tubes to the hospital laboratory with instructions to refrigerate and ship to the San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department Laboratory. Notify the Public Health Lab at (805) 781-5507, after hours at (805) 784-6493.